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ABSTRACT

Students who were enrolled at the Grand Valley State Colleges (GVSC) during fall 1977 but did not re-enroll winter 1978 were surveyed. The results showed that (1) 75 percent probably left for reasons the college could not expect to affect; (2) most complimented the college; (3) almost half had not expected to get a degree there to begin with; (4) over half intended to return; (5) many had been employed full-time during the fall; (6) over half claimed grade-point averages between 3.0 and 4.0; (7) almost three-quarters had attended another college before enrolling at GVSC; and (8) about a quarter claimed current enrollment at another college or planned to enroll elsewhere. (MSE)

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The Non-Returning Student: Why Do They Leave and Will They Return?

(A follow-up on students enrolled Fall, 1977, who did not return Winter, 1978)

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Office of Institutional Analysis

R. Bruce Tweddale
April, 1978

Report #91

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Highlights

(Based on 365 replies on a survey sent to 1,691 students enrolled Fall, 1977, who did not re-enroll Winter, 1978)

- 75% of those who did not re-enroll probably left for reasons which GVSC could not reasonably expect to affect by any direct action on its part.
- 82% said GVSC "had met their expectations"
- 83% said they would still attend Grand Valley if they had it to do over again
- They tend to rate the quality of instruction as "good", the quality of student life between "good" and "fair", and the quality of academic advising as "fair"
- Only 57% of those who did not re-enroll intended to get a degree from GVSC when they came
- Over half of them intend to return to GVSC (49% intend to return in one or two terms), while 19% are undecided
- Over half of them had been at Grand Valley two terms or less
- 48% of those in the four undergraduate colleges said they were employed full-time during Fall, 1977
- Over half of them said their grade point average at Grand Valley was between 3.0 and 4.0
- 72% had attended another college prior to attending GVSC
- Only 14% of the leavers from the four undergraduate colleges were 18-19 years old
- 26% said they were either currently enrolled in another non-GVSC college, or intend to do so in the near future
- Two-thirds said that there was nothing Grand Valley could have done which would have caused them to re-enroll for Winter, 1978

Background

As a part of its overall effort, the Retention Committee at Grand Valley was interested in gathering some information on the students who leave GVSC and why they did so.

The Research Subcommittee of the Retention Committee took a look at past and present methods utilized by Grand Valley in an attempt to get such data. Several years ago, efforts were made by telephone and mail surveys. However, they were not recent enough to provide good data on our current situation. In addition, some of the students who officially withdrew prior to the end of any given term filled out a short form in the Counseling Center which asked for their reasons for withdrawal. This system had two serious drawbacks. First, it did not get any information on students who completed the term and did not re-register for a subsequent term. Secondly, it was very brief and most respondents used the socially acceptable reason of "finances."

For these reasons, the Research Subcommittee decided to embark on a new effort, to be done through the Office of Institutional Analysis. A mail survey design was drafted by the office and modified by the Research Subcommittee. The final draft was approved by the Retention Committee itself. A copy of the survey instrument is shown on Attachment #1. The instrument was designed to try to identify in some detail the reasons why the student did not re-register. Fourteen (14) reasons why students might leave were listed along with a "none of the above." The non-returning student was asked to indicate which of these reasons come the closest to reflecting the reason why he did not return. In order to translate these reasons for leaving into more concrete terms, the respondent was asked to cite or describe specific situations or events which caused them to check that particular reasons for not re-enrolling at GVSC.

In order to check their general level of satisfaction with GVSC, they were asked if Grand Valley had met their expectations and would they still have attended if they had it to do over again.

The instrument also asked the respondents to rate the quality of teaching, advising, and student life at Grand Valley.

Methodology

Survey instruments were sent via first class mail on February 27, 1978, to all students who were enrolled Fall, 1977, who did not re-enroll Winter, 1978 (Fall 1977 graduates were excluded). The students' last permanent address was used, and 59 were returned as undeliverable because the student had moved and left no forwarding address.

The number sent, by college, and the returns as of March 21, 1978, are shown below. It should be pointed out that the college indication on those surveys which were returned are the college which the student <u>said</u> he was in.

GVSC College	# sent	# returned	%
CAS	626	173	28%
WJC	82	26	32%
CIV	16	16	100%
TJC	65	10	15%
DSI	39	0	0%
CED	577	31	5%
SGC	178	50	28%
CGS	108	32	30%
unsure	---	22	--
not indicated	---	5	--
	1,691	365	22%

Through color coding of the survey instruments, we were able to tell which responses came from actual Community Education students and which came from all other categories combined.

Category	# sent	# returned	%
Community Education	577	93	16%
All other	1,114	272	24%
	1,691	365	22%

It can be seen that two thirds of the actual Community Education students who responded actually thought they were enrolled in another category (62 out of 93). Part of this confusion may have arisen because of the wording of the question (#16). The question asked was "College at GVSC in which you were last enrolled." They may have interpreted this as the "course" in which they were last enrolled.

It is difficult to make any statements about the sufficiency of the 22% return rate. This author thought that a 20% return rate would be about the highest that could be expected, given the fact that the respondents were not currently enrolled at GVSC. Any generalizations from this data from 365 respondents to the general population of 1,691 non-enrollees for Winter, 1978, must be done with some degree of caution. It is possible that the sample of 365 is not truly representative of the 1,691. For instance, one might hypothesize that the students who entertain some thought of eventually returning to GVSC might be more prone to respond to the survey than those who have completely severed their ties with us.

Results

Before getting into a detailed discussion of the results, I would like to make some general observations. First, the survey instrument appeared to "work." Whereas prior data elicited a preponderence of reasons for leaving that were of the socially acceptable "financial hardship" variety, the reasons for leaving given on this survey exhibited much more variety. Secondly, a reading of the responses to the open-ended questions and the comments sections leads this author to believe that the respondents were generally trying to be very honest and constructive. In some cases, it was almost a feeling of "I'm glad you asked!".

The percentage distribution of responses, displayed by the GVSC college the respondent said he belonged to are shown in Attachment #2.

1. Reason For Leaving

The distribution of reasons indicated by the respondents is shown below.

Reason	% of Total
(1) Courses were not preparing me for a career	1.12%
(2) Quality of instruction	5.31%
(3) Courses or program wanted were not offered	3.35%
(4) Didn't "fit in" with student body	1.40%
(5) Couldn't keep up academic pace	8.10%
(6) Courses not offered or offered at inconvenient time	13.13%
(7) College wasn't worth time or money	.28%
(8) Temporary interruption because of finances	10.61%
(9) Found I did not need a college education	.28%
(10) Ever increasing cost forced quitting	1.40%
(11) Distance from home to campus	3.91%
(12) Not satisfied with academic achievement	1.12%
(13) Personal reasons unrelated to GVSC	22.07%
(14) Couldn't decide on academic program	1.96%
(15) None of the above	25.98%
	100.00%

An examination of the reasons listed when "none of the above" (stem #15) was checked reveals that about one-third of them left for reasons stated under stem #'s 1-14, but were stated in slightly different ways. The breakout of the 25.98% of the responses under stem #15 is listed below.

(2) Quality of instruction	1.51%
(6) Courses not offered or offered at inconvenient time	.26%
(8) Temporary interruption because of finances	.26%
(12) Not satisfied with academic achievement	1.12%
(13) Personal reasons unrelated to GVSC	6.29%
(14) Couldn't decide on academic program	.26%
Didn't want to drive in the winter	3.04%
Graduate, guest, or non-degree seeking	10.05%
Transferred for legitimate reasons	2.78%
General dissatisfaction	.26%
Isolated campus	.26%
Administrative "hassle"	.75%
	25.98%

If we pick out from the above reasons those things which GVSC might affect by direct actions (quality of instruction, course or program related items, general dissatisfaction, and administrative hassle), we find that this amounts to only 25% of the total. In other words, we

could probably not realistically hope to affect 75% of the attrition from Fall, 1977, to Winter, 1978, under the best of conditions.

It is interesting to note that only 12% said they left for financial reasons. It is especially noteworthy that only 1% said that "the ever increasing cost of attending has forced me to quit." Even though many of us feel that increasing tuition rates have caused students to take a smaller number of credits per term, it evidently has not caused many to leave altogether.

2. Did GVSC Meet Their Expectations?

The respondents were asked if, in general, GVSC was the kind of place they expected it to be. 82% said "yes," and 18% said "no." They were also asked in what way GVSC had not met their expectations. This author categorized the responses of those who said that Grand Valley had not met their expectations. The percentage distribution is shown below.

Why GVSC did not meet expectations	% of Total
GVSC was better than they expected	25.45%
Negative statements about quality of instructors	16.36%
Negative statements about student body	5.45%
Negative statements about academic program quality	14.55%
Negative statements about social relationships	21.82%
Miscellaneous	16.37%
	100.00%

3. Would They Do It Over Again?

In order to get at the respondents' general level of satisfaction with Grand Valley, they were asked "If you had to do it over again, would you still have attended Grand Valley?". In total, 83% responded "yes" to this statement. On the other hand, 17% evidentally felt that they had made a bad choice with respect to either attending Grand Valley or attending college at all.

4. Rating of Quality of Instruction

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the quality of instruction was "very good", "good", "fair", "poor", or "very poor".

Quality of Instruction	% of Total
(1) Very good	22.4%
(2) Good	54.0%
(3) Fair	19.3%
(4) Poor	2.3%
(5) Very poor	2.0%
	100.0%

Using a numerical designation from one (1) for "very good" through five (5) for "very poor", we can calculate a mean rating if we're willing to assume an equal "distance" between the five categories.

College	Mean Rating	N
CAS	2.1	169
TJC	1.7	9
WJC	2.0	25
CIV	1.9	14
CED	2.1	29
SGC	2.2	50
CGS	2.1	30
unsure	2.1	22
Total	2.1	348

Overall, the respondents tend to rate the quality of instruction just a peg below the "good" category.

5. Rating of Quality of Student Life

Using the same five point scale as in #4, respondents rated the quality of student life at GVSC.

Quality of Student Life	% of Total
(1) Very good	7.9%
(2) Good	49.2%
(3) Fair	31.7%
(4) Poor	6.4%
(5) Very poor	4.8%

The mean scores on quality of student life are:

College	Mean Rating	N
CAS	2.6	142
TJC	2.3	7
WJC	2.9	23
CIV	2.2	6
CED	2.1	14
SGC	2.3	33
CGS	2.3	17
unsure	2.5	10
Total	2.5	252

Thus, the overall rating on quality of student life is mid-way between "good" and "fair". Probably of significance is the fact that 30% of the respondents did not even answer this question (27% for undergrads and 39% for grads). This may indicate that a fairly large proportion

of the student body does not consider the quality of student life to be of any significance to them. They're probably interested only in instruction and not overly concerned about student life.

6. Degree Plans at GVSC

The respondents were asked "When you first came to GVSC, did you plan to receive a degree from GVSC?".

Degree Plans	% of Total
Yes, and I still do	45.87%
Yes, but I've changed my mind	10.83%
No	25.64%
I was undecided	17.66%
	(N=351)

It can be seen that only 57% of the respondents ever intended to get a degree from GVSC when they first enrolled here. Of those who intended to get a degree from GVSC, 11% now have changed their minds.

7. Quality of Academic Advising

Using the same five point scale we used for quality of instruction and quality of student life, we asked them to rate the quality of academic advising they had received at GVSC.

Quality of Academic Advising	% of Total
(1) Very good	15.5%
(2) Good	31.0%
(3) Fair	26.4%
(4) Poor	16.9%
(5) Very poor	10.2%

The mean scores are shown below.

College	Mean Rating	N
CAS	3.0	144
TJC	2.3	6
WJC	3.0	23
CIV	1.9	12
CED	2.3	16
SGC	2.5	44
CGS	2.4	26
unsure	3.0	13
Total	2.8	284

The overall mean rating on the quality of academic advising was 2.8, or slightly above a "fair" rating. This compares with a mean rating of 2.1 on quality of teaching and 2.5 on quality of student life. Twenty

two percent (22%) of the respondents did not reply to this item. Many of those who did not respond noted that they did not rate academic advising because they had never received any.

8. Do They Intend to Return to GVSC?

Intend to Return to GVSC	% of Total
Yes, in one or two terms	49.0%
Yes, in a year or two	7.0%
Undecided at this point	19.2%
No	24.8%

In excess of half of those students enrolled Fall, 1977, who did not register for Winter, 1978, intend to return to GVSC, with another 19% being undecided at this point. If their current intentions are carried out, Grand Valley really only lost between 25%--44% of this group.

9. How Long Had They Been at GVSC?

College	Mean # terms at GVSC	N	Maximum # terms at GVSC
CAS	4.6	159	20
TJC	2.5	10	11
WJC	4.0	26	12
CIV	2.0	14	7
CED	2.0	30	10
SGC	3.9	47	15
CGS	4.5	30	20
unsure	1.4	22	2
Total	3.9	338	20

As one would expect, SGC and CGS have the highest mean number of terms of attendance because of the fact that they have graduates of GVSC. Over half of the total had been at Grand Valley only one or two terms.

10. Did They Work While at GVSC?

Did They Work	% of Total
Yes, full time	60.39%
Yes, part time off campus	18.26%
Yes, part time on campus	2.81%
No	18.54%

It can be seen that 82% of the students had some kind of a job during Fall, 1977. It also appears that students with part-time employment on campus constituted a very small proportion of this group.

Some might think that the relative high percentage of students who held full-time jobs was caused solely by graduate students and Community Education students. When one looks at the above discribution only for students who were in the four undergraduate colleges, this assumption is destroyed. Fully 48% of the undergraduate students in the four undergraduate colleges said they were employed full-time during Fall, 1977, and 23% said they held off-campus part-time jobs. Thus, 71% of the undergraduate regular students were employed, either full-time or part-time off campus. I'm sure that this number is much higher than many would have thought. With this knowledge, it's no wonder that student activities and student government have difficulty generating interest in their activities.

The question still remains--were the students in the undergraduate colleges who held full-time jobs primarily part-time students? The answer is no. They were roughly equally divided between normal academic loads of 1-5, 6-10, and 11 or more credits per term.

11. What Kind of Grades Did They Receive?

The respondents were asked to indicate their cumulative grade point average at GVSC within certain ranges.

Cumulative GPA	% of Total
3.0 - 4.0	54.07%
2.0 - 2.9	25.29%
1.0 - 1.9	3.20%
under 1.0	.29%
not applicable	17.15%
Total	100.00%
	(N=344)

A little over half of the students reported cumulative gpa's of 3.0 to 4.0. If their reporting of this data is accurate, the students who did not re-enroll for Winter, 1978, were good students. Were these 3.0-4.0 students leaving to transfer to another institution? In no greater proportion than the total group. In total, 26% of the respondents were either now enrolled in another college or university, or anticipated doing so in the near future. For those with 3.0-4.0 grade point averages, the total was 25%.

12. Where Did They Live?

Where they lived	% of Total
With parents/relatives	31.91%
Ravine apartments	1.42%
GVSC residence halls	3.70%
Off-campus, not with parent/relative	62.96%
	100.00%

13. Did They Attend Another College Prior to GVSC?

When asked if they had attended another college or university prior to attending GVSC, 72% responded "yes". The corresponding figure (percentage of transfer students) for our total Fall, 1977, enrollment was 55%. Thus, this group is over-represented by transfer students when compared to our total student population. This author assumed that those students who came here as transfers were more likely to now be attending elsewhere than those that come to GVSC without prior college experience, on the hypothesis that transferring from one institution to another can become habit forming.

The data does not bear out this hypothesis.

Transferred out, or intend to do so

	Yes	No	Total	N
Came to GVSC as transfers	27.45%	72.55%	100.00%	255
Came to GVSC as freshmen	22.77%	77.23%	100.00%	101

It can be seen that the percentage of students who transferred to GVSC who are transferring out is only 5% higher than for those who entered GVSC without prior collegiate experience.

14. How Old Are They?

College	Mean age this group	Mean Age Total Fall, 1977 Enrollment
CAS	25.6	23.2
TJC	28.2	23.6
WJC	24.3	24.8
CIV	33.1	29.3
CED	27.6	28.2
SGC	28.5	30.3
CGS	29.9	31.5
unsure	27.6	N/A
Total	27.0	24.8

The group under study in this survey had a mean age a little over two years greater than the mean age for GVSC's total Fall, 1977, enrollment. The leavers in CAS, TJC, and CIV were older as a group than their counterparts in the total Fall, 1977, enrollment. On the other hand WJC, CED, SGC, and CGS leavers were younger.

In the four undergraduate colleges, only 14% of the leavers were 18-19 years old. This tends to cast doubt on the commonly held conception that primary retention efforts should be focused on the new entering freshman student who was only recently graduated from high school.

15. What was Their Normal Credit Hour Load at GVSC?

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of credits per term they normally took while enrolled at Grand Valley. This distribution along with that of all students enrolled Fall, 1977, is shown below.

	1 - 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 or more	
College	Respondents	Total F'77	Respondents	Total F'77	Respondents	Total F'77	Respondents	Total F'77
CAS	24.70%	9.87%	21.69%	13.50%	47.59%	62.01%	6.02%	14.62%
TJC	44.44	6.82	11.11	6.57	33.33	63.38	11.11	23.23
WJC	16.00	8.57	12.00	8.42	68.00	54.50	4.00	28.51
CIV	71.43	24.85	21.43	27.88	7.14	36.36	0	10.91
CED	72.41	60.73	17.24	20.10	6.90	16.77	3.45	2.40
SGC	70.00	74.44	20.00	23.15	8.00	2.04	2.00	.37
CGS	78.13	77.02	9.38	19.25	12.50	3.11	0	.62
unsure	63.16	N/A	15.79	N/A	21.05	N/A	0	N/A
Total	44.19%	23.43%	18.60%	14.81%	33.14%	48.90%	4.07%	12.86%

In total, those who did not re-enroll Winter, 1978, tended to be students taking a lower credit hour load compared to the total Fall, 1977, enrollment. The same held true for all of the four undergraduate colleges.

17. Did They Finish The Term?

The respondents were asked whether they had finished fall term (i.e., attended classes through the end of term and taken examinations, if any).

Finished the term	% of Total
Yes	80.78%
No	19.22%

18. Are They Transferring to Another College?

The respondents were asked whether they were currently enrolled in another college or university (or will be in the near future).

College	Yes	N
CAS	26.47%	170
TJC	10.00%	10
WJC	38.46%	26
CIV	18.75%	16
CED	41.94%	31
SGC	20.00%	50
CGS	9.67%	31
unsure	36.36%	22
Total	26.12%	356

About one quarter of the students indicated they were going to another college or university. The 93 who so indicated said they were attending 31 different institutions. The largest number, 16 [illegible]id they were attending Western Michigan University (11 of the 16 [illegible]n Community Education). The next highest was Michigan State Univ[illegible] with 11 indicating they were now enrolled there. These two ins[illegible]itions were followed by Grand Rapids Junior College (9) and Calvin College (5). All of those from Calvin were actually guest students at Grand Valley for special programs and were merely returning to Calvin to complete their studies.

19. What Is Their Current Employment Status?

Employment status	% of Total
Full-time	74.72%
Part-time	7.78%
Seeking employment	8.33%
Voluntarily Unemployed	9.17%
	100.00%
	(N=360)

Since 60% had said they were employed full-time during Fall, 1977, and 75% now indicate full-time employment, we might assume that 15% of those that did not re-enroll for Winter, 1977, went into full-time employment.

20. Could GVSC Have Done Anything That Would Have Caused Them to Re-enroll Winter, 1978?

About one-third of the respondents answered "yes" to this question, and this percentage held pretty constant over all colleges. If they said "yes", we asked for particulars. When these responses are categorized, they fall out as follows.

What GVSC Could Have Done	% of Total
Offered courses in a more convenient location	22%
Offered courses at a more convenient time	15%
Given more financial aid	13%
Offer greater variety of courses	11%
Had a different or more sympathetic instructor	9%
Had better advising	8%
Improved program quality	4%
Resolved an administrative problem	3%
Lower tuition	2%
Miscellaneous	13%*

*these ranged all the way from "offer better off-campus housing" to "become a university".

Fully 48% of those who felt GVSC could have done something to keep them enrolled gave a reason that revolved around academic scheduling (variety, location, or time of courses). Financial problems came up 15% of the time. Problems with instruction and advising represented 17% of the total.

Some Item Response Comparisons

With twenty items in the survey, there are a large number of item response comparisons which can be done. This author was particularly interested in two of these--1) responses of students who said GVSC did not meet their expectations versus those who said we did, and 2) those who intend to return to GVSC versus those who don't. In each of these cases, a chi-square analysis of each of the other 19 items was done against the groups. Differences between the groups will be discussed only if the significance of the differences was 90% or greater.

1. Respondents Who Said GVSC Had Not Met Their Expectations Versus Those Who Said We Had

   a. There were differences between the groups on the reason for leaving GVSC. The largest differences were that those who felt GVSC had not met their expectations were more likely to leave because "the quality of instruction left something to be desired" and "I didn't feel I fit in with the other students at GVSC".

   b. Quite obviously, those whose expectations had been met were much more likely to intend to return to GVSC.

   c. Corraborating the results of item a. above, those whose expectations had been met tended to rank the quality of teaching as "good", while those whose expectations have not been met tended to rate it as "poor". The same holds true for their ratings of the quality of student life (halfway between "good" and "fair" on the one hand to "poor" on the other).

   d. We also find lower rankings of the quality of academic advising by those whose expectations had not been met, but the difference between the groups is not as large on this question as on quality of instruction and quality of student life.

   e. Those whose expectations had not been met were more likely to have either had no job at all during Fall, 1977, or to have had a part-time job off campus than was true for the others.

   f. Those whose expectations had not been met were more likely to have quit before the end of the term and are twice as likely to be currently enrolled in another college.

   g. Although the differences between GVSC colleges were not statistically significant, CGS and TJC had the highest percentage

whose expectations had been met (88% and 93% respectively). WJC had the highest percentage whose expectations had not been met (29% compared to 18% for all colleges combined).

2. Respondents Who Intend to Return to GVSC Versus Those Who Don't

a. As with those whose expectations had not been met, those who do not intend to return to GVSC are more likely to state "the quality of instruction left something to be desired" and "I didn't feel I fit-in with the other students at GVSC" than are those who do intend to return to GVSC.

b. Those who plan to return to GVSC give a higher rating to the quality of student life than those who do not intend to return.

c. Only 42% of those who do not intend to return originally came to Grand Valley expecting to get a degree here, while the figure is 71% for those who do intend to return.

d. Those who do not intend to return give lower ratings to the quality of academic advising.

e. The average number of terms spent at GVSC for those who do not intend to return is 2.9 versus 4.6 for those who do intend to return.

f. Those who do not intend to return are less likely to have had a full-time job, or a part-time job off campus than those who intend to return.

g. Again, differences by college are not statistically significant. However, WJC and CED had the highest percentages of their students indicating they do not intend to return (40% and 33% compared to a total of 25%), while TJC, CGS, and SGC had the highest percentages indicating they will return (80%, 81%, and 62% respectively).

h. A higher percentage of those who do not intend to return are now enrolled in another college (not very surprising!).

Summary

Trying to probe the reasons behind decisions made by human beings is very difficult. Most often, these decisions are made for very complex reasons which are not even consciously known by the individual in question.

The same is certainly true when we attempt to obtain better information about why students do not re-enroll at Grand Valley. As a result of this survey, the author would venture the following general conclusions:

1. For many students, the fact that they did not re-enroll was not a reactive decision. They see themselves primarily as fathers, housewives, or career-persons first and students only secondarily. Thus, attending GVSC is something they do when their primary function allows for it.

2. Financial considerations play a much smaller part in the process than is generally believed.

3. Not all students who do not re-enroll have negative impressions of Grand Valley. They often will see areas where they think improvement can be made, but feel that Grand Valley is performing a viable service for them.

4. Many of the negative comments which were made revolve around a perceived sense of confusion at Grand Valley. They do not seem to feel that Grand Valley's mission is very clear, and that this lack of direction is reflected in internal inconsistencies in programs and people.

5. Negative comments about faculty did not seem to relate to "academic qualifications". Rather, they dealt more with a perceived sense of indifference on the part of certain instructors as evidenced by lack of preparation, missing scheduled classes, and a certain "contempt" of the students they are teaching.

6. Academic programming remains a real problem. With so many part-time students and/or students whose primary role is not that of a student, the location and time scheduling of the courses they want must match their needs or they will not register.

7. We have a vast and virtually untapped market in students who have left Grand Valley prior to receiving a degree. In this sample, only 25%

said they did not intend to return to GVSC. It seems that we should begin to make some concerted efforts to get that other 75% back on some basis.

8. The number of students at Grand Valley who are also employed full-time is probably much larger than most would expect. The time they have available for such things as library work or group projects with other students is extremely limited.

When all is said and done, there are probably very few easy answers that would dramatically increase the retention of the students covered by this survey. In all likelihood, most of them would have not re-enrolled despite what Grand Valley might have done.

This statement is not intended as a fatalistic one, but rather a realistic appraisal of the situation. This does not imply that nothing can be done. The survey certainly points up some areas of concern expressed by those students who did not re-enroll for Winter term.

Perhaps the most significant result of these results might be a subtle change of emphasis. It seems we should be saying to ourselves "How can we improve our services so that the students will want to return", rather than saying "How can we keep them from leaving".

Attachment #1

Office of Institutional Analysis
Grand Valley State Colleges
Allendale, Michigan 49401

Grand Valley State Colleges is interested in it's students, including those who are no longer with us. We are currently attempting to find out more about why students who were enrolled Fall, 1977 did not re-enroll Winter, 1978.

According to our records, you are such a person and are not enrolled for Winter, 1978. Would you please be so kind as to take a couple of minutes to complete the attached survey. You will notice that we are not asking you to identify yourself, because we are sincerely interested in your candid responses to the questions. Only by getting your honest appraisal can we hope to find out if, and how, we can be of better service to our students.

When you have completed the survey, please:

1)detach this cover letter from the survey

2)fold the survey on the dotted lines indicated on the back

3)staple or tape closed

4)drop the survey in the mailbox (no postage is required)

Thanks for your help!

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Tweddale

R. Bruce Tweddale
Assistant Director

P.S. Even though you may intend to return to Grand Valley, we are still interested in your responses to this survey.

Survey of Non-Returning Students

(Please check only one of the possible responses when multiple choices are offered.)

1. Below are listed several reasons why some students leave college, either temporarily or for good. Please check the one reason which comes the closest to reflecting the reason why you did not re-enroll at GVSC.

____ (1) The courses at GVSC were not preparing me for a career.
____ (2) The quality of instruction left something to be desired.
____ (3) GVSC does not offer the courses or program I'm looking for. Which course or program? _____
____ (4) I didn't feel I "fit in" with the other students at GVSC.
____ (5) With everything else I have to do, I could not keep up with the academic pace.
____ (6) The GVSC course(s) which I wanted were either not offered or were at times which were inconvenient with respect to my personal schedule.
____ (7) I found that going to college just wasn't worth the time, money, and energy that it required.
____ (8) I decided to temporarily interrupt my college-career because of financial obligations, but I intend to continue once this problem is solved.
____ (9) I found that I did not really need a college education in order to do what I now want with my life.
____ (10) I wanted to continue at GVSC, but the ever increasing cost of attending has forced me to quit.
____ (11) GVSC is just too far from my home and commuting back and forth caused too much inconvenience.
____ (12) I was not satisfied with my level of academic achievement.
____ (13) I'm leaving for reasons which have nothing to do with my experience at GVSC (e.g., job, travel, marriage, illness, etc.)
____ (14) I couldn't decide what academic program to pursue.
____ (15) None of the above. I'm leaving for the following reason:

_____

For the item you have checked above, will you please describe below what happened to you to cause you to respond the way you did? (give specific situations, events, conditions, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

2. In general, was GVSC the kind of place you expected it to be? ____(1)yes ____(2)no

In what way? _____

3. If you had to do it over again, would you still have attended GVSC?
____(1)yes ____(2)no

(MORE)

4. How would you rate the quality of teaching at GVSC?
____(1)very good ____(2)good ____(3)fair
____(4)poor ____(5)very poor

5. How would you rate the quality of student life at GVSC?
____(1)very good ____(2)good ____(3)fair
____(4)poor ____(5)very poor

6. When you first came to GVSC, did you plan to receive a degree from GVSC?
____(1)yes, and I still do ____(2)yes, but I've changed my mind
____(3)no ____(4)I was undecided

7. How would you rate the quality of academic advising you received at GVSC?
____(1)very good ____(2)good ____(3)fair
____(4)poor ____(5)very poor

8. Do you intend to return to GVSC?
____(1)no ____(2)I'm undecided at this point
____(3)yes, within one or two terms ____(4)yes, in a year or two

9. Number of terms you have attended GVSC: _____

10. Did you have a job during your last term in attendance at GVSC?
____(1)yes, full-time ____(2)yes, part-time off campus
____(3)part-time on campus ____(4)no

11. What is your cummulative grade point average at GVSC?
____(1)3.0 - 4.0 ____(2)2.0 - 2.9 ____(3)1.0 - 1.9
____(4)under 1.0 ____(5)not applicable

12. Where did you live during your last term in attendance at GVSC?
____(1)at home with parents/relatives ____(2)Ravine Apartments
____(3)GVSC Residence Halls ____(4)Off campus, not with parents/ relatives

13. Did you attend another college or university prior to attending GVSC?
____(1)no ____(2)yes--specify last college _____

14. What is your current age? _____

15. How many credits per term did you normally take while at GVSC?
____(1)1-5 ____(2)6-10 ____(3)11-15
____(4)16 or more

16. College at GVSC in which you were last enrolled:

____(1)College of Arts & Sciences
____(2)Thomas Jefferson College
____(3)William James College
____(4)College IV
____(5)Developmental Skills Institute (General Academic Program)
____(6)Community Education (ACCESS)
____(7)Seidman Graduate College
____(8)College of Graduate Studies
____(9)I'm not sure

(MORE)

		CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	CED	SGC	CGS	Unsure	Total
Question #17										
	(1)	76.88%	70.00%	76.00%	75.00%	77.42%	88.00%	100.00%	86.36%	80.78%
	(2)	23.12%	30.00%	24.00%	25.00%	22.58%	12.00%	0%	13.64%	19.22%
		(N=173)	(N=10)	(N=25)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=50)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=359)
Question #18										
	(1)	26.47%	10.00%	38.46%	18.75%	41.94%	20.00%	9.68%	36.36%	26.12%
	(2)	73.53%	90.00%	61.54%	81.25%	58.06%	80.00%	90.32%	63.64%	73.88%
		(N=170)	(N=10)	(N=26)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=50)	(N=31)	(N=22)	(N=358)
Question #19										
	(1)	71.10%	70.00%	61.54%	62.50%	74.19%	96.00%	84.38%	68.18%	74.72%
	(2)	8.09	10.00	11.54	18.75	12.90	0	6.25	4.55	7.78
	(3)	11.56	20.00	15.38	0	3.23	0	3.13	9.09	8.83
	(4)	9.25	0	11.54	18.75	9.68	4.00	6.25	18.18	9.17
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=173)	(N=10)	(N=26)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=50)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=360)
Question #20										
	(1)	67.32%	62.50%	66.67%	64.29%	72.41%	66.67%	76.00%	57.14%	67.39%
	(2)	32.68%	37.50%	33.33%	35.71%	27.59%	33.33%	24.00%	42.81%	32.61%
		(N=153)	(N=8)	(N=24)	(N=14)	(N=29)	(N=48)	(N=25)	(N=21)	(N=322)

17. Did you finish your last term at GVSC (i.e., attend classes through the end of term and take examinations, if any)?
____(1)yes ____(2)no

18. Are you currently enrolled in another college or university (or will be in the near future)?
____(1)yes ____(2)no
Which one?_____

19. I am currently:
____(1)employed full-time
____(2)employed part-time
____(3)seeking employment
____(4)Unemployed and not seeking employment

20. Is there anything that GVSC could have done that would have caused you to re-enroll instead of leaving?
____(1)no ____(2)yes
What?_____
_____

Please comment below on ways in which GVSC might have been of better service to you.

Thank You!

(Please fold so that address on back is showing, staple or tape closed, and drop in the mail--no postage is required.)

Attachment #2

Percentage Distribution of Responses

		CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	CED	SGC	CGS	Unsure	Total
Question #1										
	(1)	1.16%	0%	3.85%	0%	3.23%	0%	0%	0%	1.12%
	(2)	2.89	0	15.38	0	9.68	8.16	6.25	4.55	5.31
	(3)	4.62	0	0	0	3.23	2.04	3.13	4.55	3.35
	(4)	2.89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.40
	(5)	9.25	0	0	6.25	6.45	10.20	12.50	4.55	8.10
	(6)	13.29	0	3.85	12.50	12.90	14.29	25.00	9.09	13.13
	(7)	.58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.28
	(8)	10.98	33.33	26.92	6.25	3.23	4.08	12.50	4.55	10.61
	(9)	.58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.28
	(10)	1.16	0	3.85	6.25	3.23	0	0	0	1.40
	(11)	4.05	0	0	12.50	3.23	4.08	0	9.09	3.91
	(12)	1.73	0	0	0	0	2.04	0	0	1.12
	(13)	19.65	33.33	26.92	6.25	12.90	36.73	15.63	31.82	22.07
	(14)	2.31	0	3.85	0	3.23	0	3.13	0	1.96
	(15)	24.86	33.33	15.38	50.00	38.71	18.37	21.88	31.82	25.98
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=173)	(N=9)	(N=26)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=49)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=358)
Question #2										
	(1)	81.55%	87.50%	70.83%	86.67%	83.33%	85.42%	93.10%	72.22%	82.35%
	(2)	18.45%	12.50%	29.17%	13.33%	16.67%	14.58%	6.90%	27.78%	17.65%
		(N=168)	(N=8)	(N=24)	(N=15)	(N=30)	(N=48)	(N=29)	(N=18)	(N=340)
Question #3										
	(1)	79.41%	100.00%	73.91%	80.00%	86.21%	89.80%	96.77%	80.95%	83.24%
	(2)	20.59%	0%	26.09%	20.00%	13.79%	10.20%	3.23%	19.05%	16.76%
		(N=170)	(N=8)	(N=23)	(N=15)	(N=29)	(N=49)	(N=31)	(N=21)	(N=346)
Question #4										
	(1)	20.71%	55.56%	28.00%	21.43%	27.59%	18.00%	16.67%	27.27%	22.41%
	(2)	53.85	22.22	56.00	71.43	48.28	58.00	63.33	40.91	54.02
	(3)	23.08	22.22	8.00	7.14	17.24	14.00	16.67	27.27	19.25
	(4)	1.18	0	4.00	0	3.45	4.00	3.33	4.55	2.30
	(5)	1.18	0	4.00	0	3.45	6.00	0	0	2.01
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=169)	(N=9)	(N=25)	(N=14)	(N=29)	(N=50)	(N=30)	(N=22)	(N=348)

		CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	CED	SGC	CGS	Unsure	Total
Question #5										
	(1)	9.15%	28.57%	8.70%	0%	7.14%	0%	11.76%	0%	7.94%
	(2)	44.37	28.57	26.09	83.33	78.57	66.67	47.06	70.00	49.21
	(3)	33.10	28.57	39.13	16.67	7.14	33.33	41.18	20.00	31.75
	(4)	7.04	14.29	17.39	0	7.14	0	0	0	6.35
	(5)	6.34	0	8.70	0	0	0	0	10.00	4.76
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=142)	(N=7)	(N=23)	(N=6)	(N=14)	(N=33)	(N=17)	(N=10)	(N=252)
Question #6										
	(1)	55.62%	66.67%	42.31%	25.00%	12.90%	37.50%	67.74%	14.29%	45.87%
	(2)	13.02	0	26.92	6.25	6.45	10.42	3.23	0	10.83
	(3)	17.16	11.11	11.54	50.00	67.74	14.58	22.58	66.67	25.64
	(4)	14.20	22.22	19.23	18.75	12.90	37.50	6.45	19.05	17.66
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=169)	(N=9)	(N=26)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=48)	(N=31)	(N=21)	(N=351)
Question #7										
	(1)	11.81%	33.33%	13.04%	33.33%	25.00%	20.45%	15.38%	7.69%	15.49%
	(2)	27.78	33.33	21.74	41.67	37.50	31.82	42.31	38.46	30.99
	(3)	23.61	16.67	34.78	25.00	31.25	34.09	26.92	15.38	26.41
	(4)	23.61	0	13.04	0	0	9.09	15.38	23.08	16.90
	(5)	13.19	16.67	17.39	0	6.25	4.55	0	15.38	10.21
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=144)	(N=6)	(N=23)	(N=12)	(N=16)	(N=44)	(N=26)	(N=13)	(N=284)
Question #8										
	(1)	26.90%	10.00%	40.00%	18.75%	33.33%	16.00%	12.50%	28.57%	24.79%
	(2)	20.47	10.00	16.00	25.00	23.33	22.00	6.25	19.05	19.15
	(3)	44.44	70.00	28.00	56.25	40.00	60.00	75.00	42.86	49.01
	(4)	8.19	10.00	16.00	0	3.33	2.00	6.25	9.52	7.04
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=171)	(N=10)	(N=25)	(N=16)	(N=30)	(N=50)	(N=32)	(N=21)	(N=355)
Question #9										
Mean # terms at GVSC		4.6	2.5	4.0	2.0	2.0	3.9	4.5	1.4	3.9

		CAS	TJC	WJC	CIV	CED	SGC	CGS	Unsure	Total
Question #10										
	(1)	49.71%	44.44%	30.77%	60.00%	67.74%	93.88%	81.25%	71.43%	60.39%
	(2)	21.97	22.22	34.62	13.33	19.35	4.08	12.50	9.52	18.26
	(3)	3.47	11.11	7.69	0	0	2.04	0	0	2.81
	(4)	24.86	22.22	26.92	26.67	12.90	0	6.25	19.05	18.54
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=173)	(N=9)	(N=26)	(N=15)	(N=31)	(N=49)	(N=32)	(N=21)	(N=356)
Question #11										
	(1)	45.24%	28.57%	25.00%	27.27%	50.00%	78.00%	87.50%	72.73%	54.07%
	(2)	38.69	14.29	0	18.18	0	14.00	6.25	13.64	25.29
	(3)	4.76	0	0	9.09	0	0	3.13	4.55	3.20
	(4)	.60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.29
	(5)	10.71	57.14	75.00	45.45	50.00	8.00	3.13	9.09	17.15
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=168)	(N=7)	(N=24)	(N=11)	(N=30)	(N=50)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=344)
Question #12										
	(1)	38.60%	11.11%	15.38%	28.57%	50.00%	22.00%	23.33%	19.05%	31.91%
	(2)	2.34	0	3.85	0	0	0	0	0	1.42
	(3)	5.85	11.11	7.69	0	0	0	0	0	3.70
	(4)	53.22	77.78	73.08	71.43	50.00	78.00	76.67	80.95	62.96
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=171)	(N=9)	(N=26)	(N=14)	(N=30)	(N=50)	(N=30)	(N=21)	(N=351)
Question #13										
	(1)	37.57%	20.00%	34.62%	31.25%	25.81%	8.16%	12.50%	22.73%	28.41%
	(2)	62.43%	80.00%	65.38%	68.75%	74.19%	91.84%	87.50%	77.27%	71.59%
		(N=173)	(N=10)	(N=26)	(N=16)	(N=31)	(N=49)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=359)
Question #14										
	Mean age	25.6	28.2	24.3	33.1	27.6	28.5	29.9	27.6	27.0
		(N=168)	(N=10)	(N=24)	(N=16)	(N=30)	(N=48)	(N=32)	(N=22)	(N=350)
Question #15										
	(1)	24.70%	44.44%	16.00%	71.43%	72.41%	70.00%	78.13%	63.16%	44.19%
	(2)	21.69	11.11	12.00	21.43	17.24	20.00	9.38	15.79	18.60
	(3)	47.59	33.33	68.00	7.14	6.90	8.00	12.50	21.05	33.14
	(4)	6.02	11.11	4.00	0	3.45	2.00	0	0	4.07
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		(N=166)	(N=9)	(N=25)	(N=14)	(N=29)	(N=50)	(N=32)	(N=19)	(N=344)